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Carl Wimar

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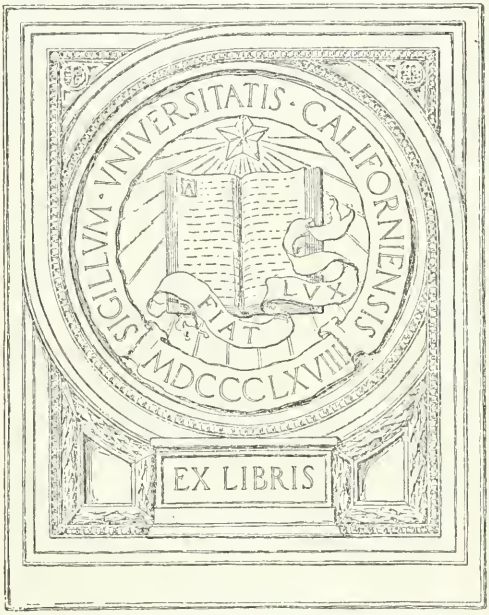

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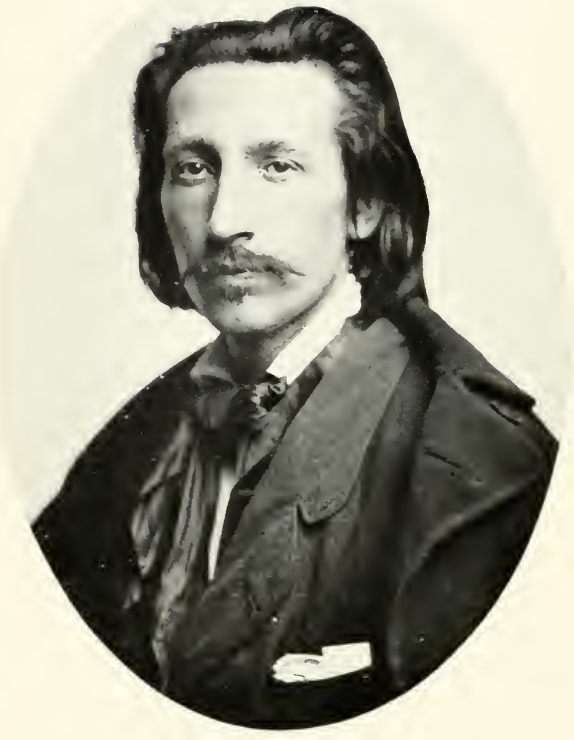

CARL WIMAR

CARL WIMAR

A BIOGRAPHY

BY

WILLIAM ROMAINE HODGES

CATALOGUE OF PICTURES AND ILLUSTRATIONS

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Author's Preface

THIS book owes its existence to the unselfish interest and extensive research of Mr. Charles Reymershoffer, who by acquiring one of Wimar's most important and spirited works, "Buffalo Hunt by Indians," became impressed not only with the genius of the artist, but with the fact herein set forth, that Wimar was the first to appreciate and worthily utilize pictorially the Indian and buffalo.

The basis of this biography is an article by the writer, published in 1881 in the *American Art Review* and illustrated by the distinguished artist Harry Chase, which was the first recognition of Wimar by an art journal of acknowledged authority. A large portion of the historical data, together with the catalogue and ownership of the Wimar pictures is due to the investigations of Mr. Reymershoffer, who at his own risk and without hope of profit produces this work as a contribution to the art history of our country.

BUFFALO HUNT BY INDIANS

As these phases of human life have now passed away, never to be renewed, it seems important that the memory of them should be perpetuated.—*Schoolcraft.*

CHARLES FERDINAND WIMAR, or Carl Wimar, according to the shorter form which he himself preferred to use, is the name of a painter whose biography will not be found in most of the popular works relating to artists; yet the productions of few American painters possess so great an ethnological interest as his. Born at Siegburg, Germany, February 19, 1828, he came to America at the age of fifteen.

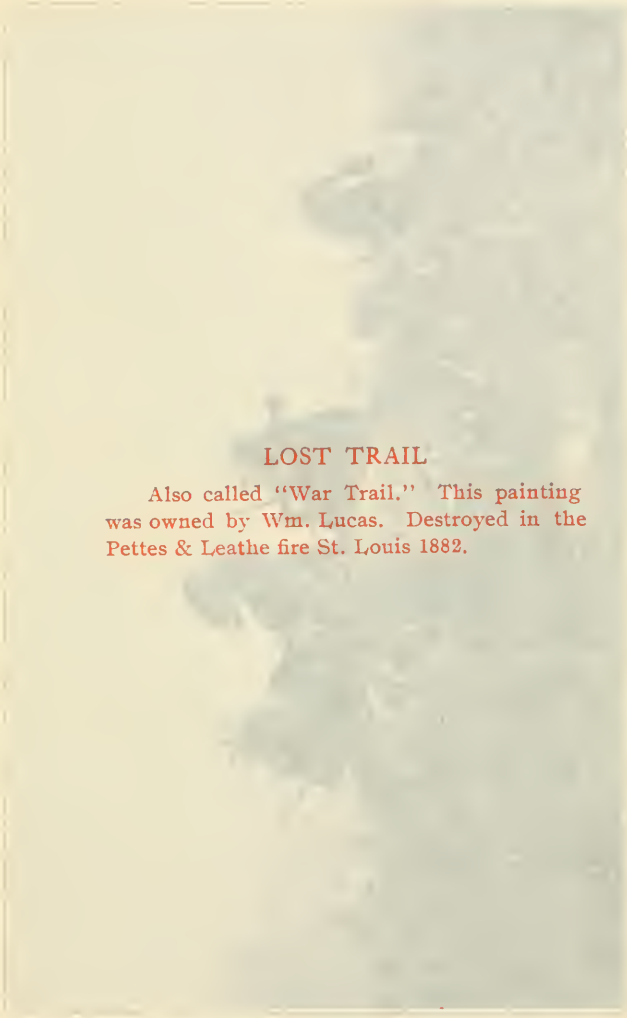
At that time St. Louis was a frontier town, and, as it was the headquarters of the American Fur Company, large numbers of Indians made annual pilgrimages to the place for the purpose of exchanging furs for such commodities as were needed in their savage life. Their dealings were almost exclusively with the French, who settled upon the spot, selected as a trading post by Pierre Laclede Liguest, in 17[illegible], and the American Fur Company was controlled by his descendants.

There was no antagonism between the French and Indians. I say the French, although Americans by birth and an ancestry extending back through succeeding generations for more than a century, they still retained the language, traditions and customs of the original settlers. It was no uncommon thing for a Frenchman to have an Indian wife, and in some cases he would conform to the usages of both civilized and savage races by having a white wife in St. Louis and a dusky one among the tribes of the Far West.

In 1843 Wimar and his mother, Mrs. Becker, one step-brother, three step-sisters and a cousin emigrated to America, his step-father, Mathias Becker, having previously emigrated and settled in St. Louis in 1839. The family located on the outskirts of the town, near the favorite camping ground of the Indians, being the blocks between Thirteenth and Fourteenth Streets, near Olive Street, soon to be occupied by the Public Library. The shy German lad soon became a favorite with them. One warrior of noble presence took an especial fancy to the boy. He went with him into the woods, and taught him the use of Indian weapons. The Indian was pleased with the enthusiasm of the youth and his

unaffected delight in whatever he saw, while to the young German all was new and strange. The growing, bustling western village, with its population of restless frontiersmen, the mild and equable climate and months of almost uninterrupted sunshine, the sense of freedom experienced in the virgin forests and on the far-reaching flower-bedecked prairies, was, to one fresh from leaden skies, the drowsy, commonplace life characteristic of a German village, the consummation of happiness. A strange companionship was this between the stoical savage and the timid boy from the Old World. The Indian was always welcome at Wimar's home, where he would go without ceremony, open the door softly, and glide noiselessly into the family room, and startle them into a knowledge of his presence by the salutation "How?" Of what inestimable value to the future artist was this intimate association with the Indians at the age when his mind was so susceptible to lasting impressions! His association with the savages was not the result of idle curiosity merely, but was devoted to close and intelligent study of their half-nude forms and picturesque costumes. The art instinct was inherent and the dominating force of his life, as it must be with every artist worthy of the name. With the dawn of intelligence to such as he, comes the perception of things, man, earth, sky, clouds, sunshine, mountains, streams, foliage, shadow, all create impressions which to the multitude do not exist, and with it an impulse to interpret and portray; so early in childhood his slate and pencil were most often employed in attempts to express the stirrings of art within rather than the tasks assigned.

Wimar's parents were poor, and it was necessary that he should become a producer as well as a consumer. It was decided that he should learn a trade, and when consulted as to his preference he at once expressed a desire to become a painter; so his step-father took him to the shop of A. C. Wilgus, a house and steamboat painter, that being his conception of the boy's wish, but he had in his mind a certain ornamental and fresco designer as approaching more nearly his ideal. He found his master, Leon De Pomarede, appreciative and sympathetic. He soon discovered the latent talent of the boy, and entrusted him with the more important work of his establishment, such as pictorial signs, and more



LOST TRAIL

Also called "War Trail." This painting was owned by Wm. Lucas. Destroyed in the Pettes & Leathe fire St. Louis 1882.

than one "prairie schooner" and patent medicine vendor's caravan which traversed the western plains bore the handiwork of the future artist. He became a workman of rare skill, not fettered by conventional forms, but with an imagination capable of originating designs altogether surprising to his fellows. He was always prompt and cheerful in the discharge of his duties, at all times industrious and reliable, excepting on the occasion of the arrival of a fresh band of Indians, when the old passion would come over him, and in utter forgetfulness of all else he would seek companionship with the red men.

One can imagine the ecstasy of such a boy when brought in contact with man the antithesis of all previous conceptions. Primeval man, such as existed countless centuries before the pyramids; before in the delta of the Nile by learning to till the soil man took his first step toward civilization, ages before Menes, Sargon, Moses or Abraham. Of the period before there existed even a pictorial expression of human thoughts, the precursor of the hieroglyphs, the key to which was lost far back in the twilight of mythical ages and only recovered within the memory of living men. Men living entirely by the chase, loosely clad in the skins of wild beasts, which when cast aside revealed forms as superb as those which inspired Phideas, their teepees, trappings and primative weapons barbaric, picturesque. How strange that with the exception of Catlin none of our early native artists seem to have been impressed by or conscious of the boundless mine of artistic material distinctively American and at their very doors, but blindly following tradition should have been content to weakly imitate the Old Masters in the well worn fields of mythology and allegory, and that it should remain for this German boy to first worthily portray the North American Indian in the wild freedom of the mighty West. How strange that no one should have done in pictorial art what Fenimore Cooper accomplished in fiction.

It is at this period in the life of the young painter that the most romantic incident of his picturesque career occurred, and one which was to prove the stepping stone to the fulfilment of a longing which otherwise would have been impossible of accomplishment.

In the humble domicile of the Beckers one day, a poor, emaciated wayfarer, homeless and sick, rested and craved shelter and assistance. Poor as the family was, they took pity on him and offered him of their frugal store. The needy one was a Pole, of refined appearance and evident education. The family asked no questions of their guest, who on his visit became ill, but they nursed him until he had been brought back to health. In his days of convalescence, the stranger's interest in the poetic, gentle lad, with his courteous ways and his great love for art, was aroused. He spoke to him and his father of the opportunities that the boy would have in Europe for study, but they shook their heads, for such was not for them. The Pole, whose name seems never to have been asked by the charitable Beckers, after his complete recovery left the hospitable roof, with many expressions of gratitude. For years no tidings came from the stranger. Carl continued to paint wagons, houses, steamboats and sign-boards, and had almost forgotten the cultured Pole.

One day while he was on a boat with his employer, coming down the Missouri River from a sketching expedition, he was informed that he had fallen heir to a small fortune.

The Pole returning to his own country came into a sum of money. Being stricken with fatal illness, before his death he made out his will in favor of the son of the family by whom he had been sheltered and befriended. The bread cast upon the waters by the big-hearted German family had been returned, and Carl Wimar's dream was at last to be realized.

In 1849, before this money was bequeathed to him, Wimar made a journey to the Falls of St. Anthony with his employer, to make studies for a panorama of the principal points of interest on the Mississippi River from that point to its confluence with the Ohio. The tribes of Indians met by them near the Falls of St. Anthony afforded fine opportunities for study. Soon after his return, the way was unexpectedly opened to him, as just related, to realize what had heretofore been scarcely a cherished hope, and he joyfully set out for Duesseldorf in 1852. On his arrival there he became a pupil of Prof. Joseph Fay, a German painter of distinction. Fay made the mural paintings in the City Hall in Elberfeld. Later he became a painter of historical subjects, among his best known works being "Romeo and Juliet." He died in

THE BUFFALO

Theodore Roosevelt speaks of the Buffalo in a letter to the Secretary of the American Bison Society as "The biggest of the American big game, probably the most distinctive game animal of this continent and certainly the animal which played the greatest part in the lives of the Indians, and which most deeply impressed the imagination of all the old hunters and early settlers. It would be a real misfortune to permit this species to become extinct, and I hope that all good citizens will aid the society in its efforts for its preservation."

1875. Wimar writing home in 1854 says, "I have a studio at Mr. Fay's, brother-in-law of Oswald Achenbach, in the same house with him. The Achenbachs are very nice people. In America they are as celebrated as over here; this is shown by the enormous sums they receive for their works. I saw here in the Society of Artists at the time of a feast-meal, a paper and pencil laid before Andreas Achenbach and Leutze and they drew anything that entered their minds, and their drawings were immediately sold to the highest bidder, and large sums were paid therefor, so much everybody desires to have even a few lines from their hands. I shall make some drawings for the Kuenstler Album which will be engraved. There is nothing in it financially, however it is considered a great honor. They call me the Indian painter and many thought I was a descendant of the Indians." He afterwards became a pupil of Prof. Emanuel v. Leutze.

While at Duesseldorf several of his most important works were executed. Among these was "The Captive Charger," now owned in London. This I regard as technically the best of all his works. It is a powerful composition, illustrative of the war of extermination between the races, without the revolting details which by their presence would not add to the force with which the story is told, but cause one to shudder at the unnecessary portrayal of human ferocity. A small party of Indians have killed an army officer, who had doubtless ventured too far from camp, and are hurrying away with his horse and accoutrements. The eye of the finely modelled charger shows by its angry glare that he realizes the fate of his master and the character of those into whose hands he has fallen. The cowardly savages know the dire vengeance which will swiftly follow the discovery of their crimes, and, as they make their way through the prairie grass, they look eagerly around for signs of the dreaded enemy. A gorgeous sunset fills the western sky with gold dust, and tints the clouds with crimson. The swarthy forms of the savages are edged with sun-rays reflected from sky and cloud. The glory of the heavens divert the attention in a measure from the hideous story of hate, the conflict between savagery and civilization, begun with the advent of the white man upon the Atlantic coast, and which terminated after a series of desperate and hopeless conflicts following the extermination of the buffalo.

During his stay at Duesseldorf he also painted, in 1854, under the direction of Prof. Leutze, "Attack on an Emigrant Train," which was purchased by former Governor Hamilton R. Gamble of Missouri. It represents an emigrant train on the prairie attacked by Indians. Using the wagon as a stockade the white men are trying to beat off the savages. It was too common an incident of the western trails half a century ago, and frequently the only record left of the conflict would be the wheel tires and iron work of the burned wagons, and a few skeletons bleaching amid the waving grass and blooming flowers of the prairie. This picture was first exhibited at the St. Louis Annual Fair in 1869, obtaining the first prize, and also at the "Retrospective Exhibit of American Paintings at the World's Columbian Exposition" at Chicago in 1893. While under the instruction of Leutze he is said to have painted a series of four pictures illustrating the abduction of Daniel Boone's daughter. They were purchased by John A. Brownlee, then a prominent merchant of St. Louis. One of them is now owned by August A. Busch, one by Mrs. John T. Davis, another by Mrs. Julia Blanke of St. Louis. What became of the fourth picture is not known. He also painted a number of portraits of residents of St. Louis.

In 1860 originated "The Buffalo Hunt" which was purchased by Dr. Van Zandt and afterwards bequeathed to the St. Louis Art Museum. In the Fall of this year occurred the opening of the Gallery of the Western Academy of Art, which was in a manner inaugurated by such distinguished visitors as the Prince of Wales, visiting this country under the title of Baron Renfrew. Accompanying the Prince and his suite was Lord Lyons, the British Embassador at Washington. The Prince and his companion Lord Lyons were highly pleased with the fine collection of paintings and especially greatly admired the Western scenes painted by Wimar. Among these was exhibited the Van Zandt "Buffalo Hunt" of which Lord Lyons commissioned Wimar to paint a replica, which was finished the same year and sent to England.

In 1861 Wimar painted his largest Indian picture "Buffalo Hunt by Indians." This was painted especially for Mr. Henry T. Blow of St. Louis, one of the founders of the Western Academy of Art. The subject is treated entirely different

BUFFALO HUNT

Original in possession of The Fine Arts Museum of St. Louis. Replica of this picture ordered by Lord Lyons, British Ambassador at Washington, who with the Prince of Wales, now King of England, visited St. Louis in September, 1860.

than that of the Van Zandt picture. According to noted ethnologists and Indian chiefs the Indians depicted in this painting are either Osages or Pawnees. Col. W. F. Cody (Buffalo Bill) in writing about this picture states, "The Indians are pictured true to nature as they used to be in the early days, etc." Indians who have seen photographs of this work pronounce it a realistic representation of the Fall buffalo hunting contest, which was an important event in the days when the red man and buffalo inhabited the plains. This painting has been loaned to the St. Louis Museum of Fine Arts, where it is at present.

On Wimar's return to America in the Winter of 1856-1857 he found that wonderful changes had been wrought in his absence. The visits of the Indians had almost ceased, as they had been forced upon reservations in the Far West, and agencies established to care for them. His small capital had been nearly exhausted, and he felt the chilling influence of an atmosphere entirely devoid of art sympathy. Still he was as enthusiastic and as completely absorbed in his favorite theme as ever. The American Fur Company had a chain of forts on the Upper Missouri River, and during each season one or more steamboats were sent to the mountains, as it was called, to convey government stores to the Indian reservations, and bring in return furs obtained from trappers and Indians. On these steamers Wimar was enabled to penetrate to the heart of the hostile Indian country, where he spent three seasons in the arduous and dangerous task of studying the savages. He provided himself with a photographic apparatus, recommended to him by his old friend A. J. Fox, photographer, still a resident of St. Louis, and in addition to the great number of studies made in oil, crayon and pencil, he secured a quantity of photographic memoranda which was invaluable to him.

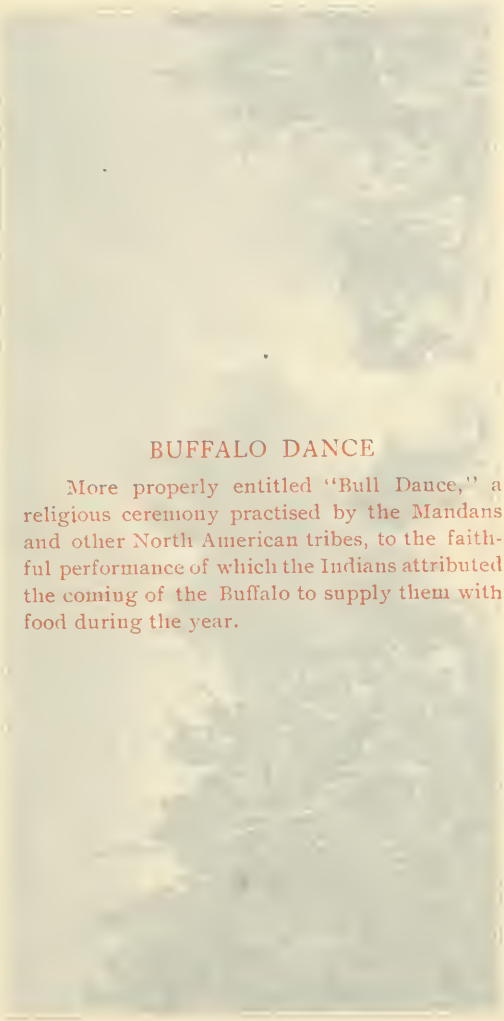
A letter describing the first of these journeys in 1858 written by Wimar and published in the Duesseldorf Journal gives so vividly his experiences and impressions that its translation is here inserted:

"During the month of May I commenced my tour to the Indian country, accompanied by the United States Indian Agent, Col. Vaughan, but was informed when we arrived at Sioux City that I had chosen rather a dangerous companion,

as considerable hostility existed between that officer of the Government and many of the most warlike tribes. Taking this matter well into consideration, and after consultation with my traveling companion, Capt. Konstantin Blandowsky, who fought in the Hungarian Revolution (afterwards killed at Camp Jackson at the outbreak of the Civil War,) it was considered a better policy to join ourselves to the American Fur Company, who were in better odor among the nations. This we accordingly did, but were not so much benefited by the change as we anticipated, for the agent still pressed himself upon us.

"The Indians whom we first encountered were the Yanktonnais, who were camped about 300 strong on the Missouri River. The spectacle presented by them was very imposing, and as we neared them they came to the shore and paraded before us, dressed in the most gaudy style, but were seized with the utmost panic when our steam organ (Calliope) began its music and only after its melodies had died away in the distance did they appear to become quiet. You may rest assured that I lost no time in arranging my photographic apparatus, and was enabled in the short space allowed me to take several groups; their chiefs then came aboard and formed a council to treat with the agent. The debate, however, was quite protracted and stormy, and ended in the refusal of the tribe to accept the usual annual presents proffered them by the Government. We were rejoiced to depart without serious misfortune, for we feared much trouble; the agent also participating in our surmises to such a degree and being aware of the fact that the Indians higher up the river were still more savage and uncompromising than those we had just visited, thought it advisable at Fort Randell to take on board a company of soldiers for our protection.

"At this point, which is about 130 miles from and above St. Louis, the Ponkas and Brulees came aboard and accepted their presents quietly, on account of the soldiers, (long knives.) At the next stopping point, we encountered the Yanktan Indians, numbering about 300 men, who were all thrown into a high degree of excitement by the appearance of the soldiers, and it was only after long persuasion that they were prevailed upon to accept the donation from the United States Agent. Although the whole of the tribe dressed in their



BUFFALO DANCE

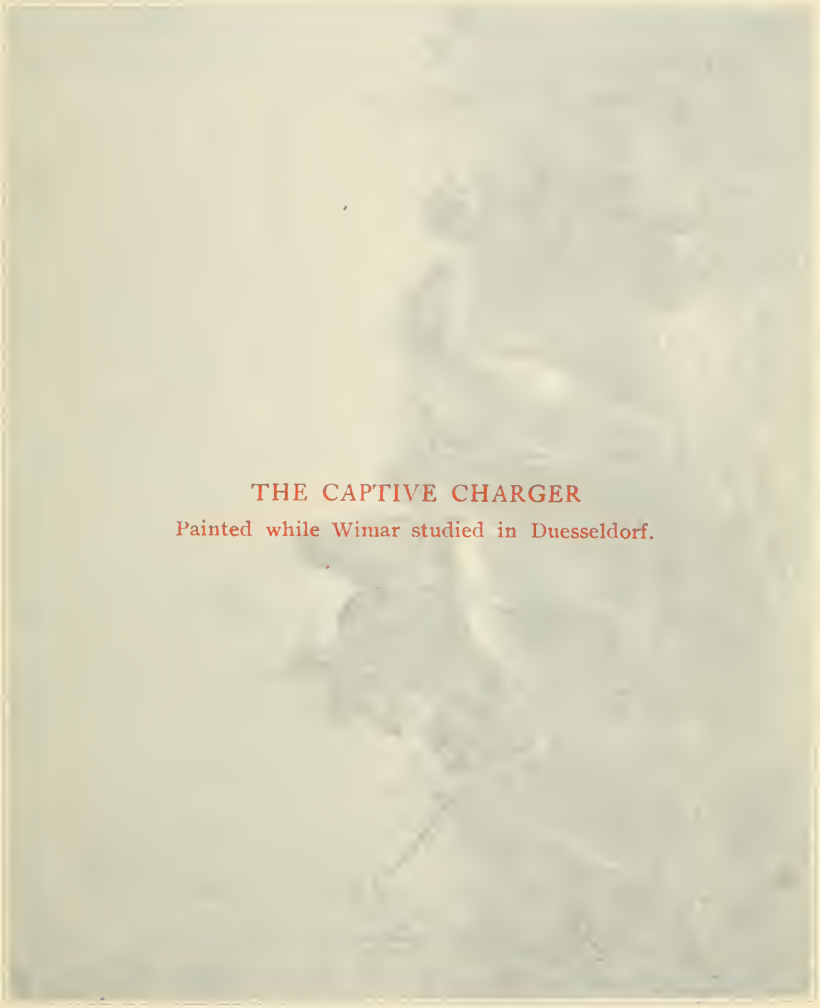
More properly entitled "Bull Dance," a religious ceremony practised by the Mandans and other North American tribes, to the faithful performance of which the Indians attributed the coming of the Buffalo to supply them with food during the year.

best habiliments were encamped upon the shore, I was only enabled to secure the portrait of one chief, for as soon as the camera was planted in a position to secure any appropriate group, the whole of them fled into the surrounding country. Of this chief, however, I obtained quite an excellent likeness.

"The next station of any import was Fort Pierre, where we found several hundred warriors of the Sioux, with their women and children; we were, however, unable to land at this point on account of the low stage of water; we therefore ascended one mile higher up the stream, followed by the Indians in procession. The chiefs formed themselves in a circle on the shore opposite the boat, their women and children being arranged behind them. After some arbitration, the greater of their warriors came aboard to confer with the agent, but like the tribe who had visited us lower down complained of the military, as thereby their suspicious natures were aroused. Of these savages, I obtained as many portraits as possible unseen to them, and also was enabled to catch several groups. Of these latter, however, the figures are rather too small on account of the distance at which I was obliged to stand while taking them. During these stoppages my extra time was occupied in trading, as before starting on my journey, I had supplied myself with many little notions for this purpose, I was enabled to procure a variety of curiosities, costumes, arms, accoutrements, etc. In the afternoon we continued our course and on the second day thereafter we were spoken to by some Indians, and according to the duty of the agent were obliged to land. We had scarcely reached the shore when some 300 savages galloped towards us in a furious manner until they were within 100 paces from our party, when they suddenly came to a halt and fired their flint locks over our heads. You can imagine our fright when we heard the whistling balls over us, but we were informed that such proceedings were intended as a sign of friendship. Some of their pieces had been aimed so low that their bullets took effect on the wheel-house of our steamer. The Indians then descended from their highly caparisoned horses, and then there was a great council formed on the prairie. The appearance of these warriors was so savage, that I was actually afraid to attempt the drawing of any of them, and as heretofore, I bethought me of traffic. Among other things I

had in my pocket a double looking-glass, one side of which magnified very largely, this I offered to an Indian for his bow and arrows. He took the glass and examined it, and when he saw his much enlarged head, he in terror threw it from him and fled from me in such a state of wild excitement that I myself was fearful lest some danger might result from the exhibition I had made. I therefore put away the glass without more delay, but was in a short time surrounded by the whole tribe, all desiring a view of the wonderful apparatus in my pocket. I again brought it forth and just exhibited to them the unmagnifying portion of the mirror, and then without their knowledge suddenly turned it with a like effect as before, they all being much alarmed. Finally, however, one of the savages consented to give me for it in exchange a handsome bow and quiver full of arrows. I made haste to return with my booty as quickly as possible to the boat, as I believe they supposed me a sorcerer, and the lives of such are in danger. When I arrived on board it was not long before I discovered that these honorable children of nature had emptied my pockets of all their contents.

"Our next destination was Fort Clarke. We arrive about seven miles therefrom in the evening, and could, had it been advisable, have reached the station that night, but were deterred on account of the notorious thieving propensities of the Arickarees who occupy this vicinity. Even at this distance from the Fort the Captain preferred to anchor a short space from the shore. This precaution, however, was not of much avail, as we had been observed by some of their spies, and a short time after midnight the Indians surrounded our craft with boats made of buffalo hides, and it was actually necessary to have most vigilant sentinels on our guards to prevent us from being robbed. This tribe is known to be very desperate and we found them so. They became very much incensed at our agent and fired at him once or twice with their muskets, a ball from one of which slightly wounded him in the foot. The appearance of the military produced such excitement that I could only procure two daguerreotypes, from which I painted without their knowledge two portraits of their chiefs. After we had remained a short time the Indians appeared to become more quiet, and Mr. Wikram, Capt. Blandowsky and myself, well armed, set out for a walk



THE CAPTIVE CHARGER

Painted while Wimar studied in Duesseldorf.

THE CAPTIVE CHARGER

Painted with Water Colours on Parchment.

through the village. Scarcely had we arrived there when a number of squaws surrounded us and exhibited so many signs of their attachment to us that, for the time, we were quite overpowered. Fortunately I had but trifles about my person, for as the crowd became more dense, I felt their hands in all my pockets. It was a great relief when a party of our men followed and delivered us, else from 'pure Love' we would have been rifled of everything we possessed. In the afternoon of the same day we left this tribe, and arrived in a few hours at the village of the Mandans, a tribe which has been decimated by the virulent smallpox. These Indians live in huts constructed of mud or clay, and their warriors in all amount to but 64. Though small in number they are regarded as the bravest of the tribes. We only remained here half an hour, and then continued our journey, arriving next morning at Fort Berthold, were we found the Grosventres (big bellies.) They live also in mud huts, after the manner of the Mandans. I was cautioned by one of our trappers not to endeavor to take a photograph of any of this tribe on account of their superstitious ideas, but the groups were so very picturesque that I could not refrain and stayed therefore for a trial. Unfortunately I was unable to hide myself from their keen vigilance, for one of the chiefs watched my proceedings and uttered a few words to his people which had the effect of dispersing them immediately, nor would they again reassemble until the photographic apparatus had been put aside.

"Our Captain, who understood the Indian language, attempted to explain to them the nature of my proceedings, after which I made the second attempt, but as soon as I had planted the camera they became so incensed that they aimed their arrows at my person, which you may imagine caused me to desist from further effort. I was informed afterwards that it was the belief of the Indians, that had I secured their portraits they would have perished with the smallpox. In order to obtain any pictures I was obliged to stand behind a curtain in which a small opening was made through which the focus of the camera was allowed to protrude.

"It was so arranged that we always continued our journey during the night when we were in the Indian country; therefore leaving the last mentioned tribe at noon, we arrived four days later at Fort Union, which is seven miles above the

mouth of the Yellowstone. We were now 2,500 miles from St. Louis, which we had traveled in about 31 days. Here we were visited by several bands of the Assinniboines, who regularly receive an annual present from the Government. Our boat then visited the site of a new fort some eight miles higher up, and we then commenced the return trip. My companions and myself remained for a short time at Fort Union making the necessary preparations for a journey further up the Yellowstone. Navigation here is impossible by steamboat, and we were obliged to build special crafts which were drawn along by men. You can easily imagine the labor which we were compelled to undergo, when I inform you that it was necessary for us all to exert ourselves vigorously to move the boats, the whole shore being so thickly covered with underwood and brushwood that it is almost impassable for men, much less for horses; at the same time, to add to our inconvenience, it was very cold and very rainy. There were 53 men in our little band, and we had in our keeping besides our own necessary outfit, the goods of the Fur Company and that of the Agent designed for Fort Sarpy, which lies about 300 miles up the Yellowstone. This distance we accomplished in about six days. During this time, our principal food consisted of buffalo meat; we consumed during the period about 64 of these animals. Each of the party cut from the carcass that portion which best suited his taste and prepared it for his own use. We cooked without seasoning and nothing could have been more palatable than this food. Notwithstanding all the hardships which we endured, this was decidedly the most interesting portion of our travels, especially the hunting. I had the good fortune on one occasion to kill a large bear, of which I brought home a huge paw as a trophy and memento. Herds of buffalo frequently swam the river in front of our boat, crossing often so near that many times we entertained great fear for her safety. We killed often many of these animals, and generally selected for food the female, leaving the others to the wolves, who followed our track in great numbers, and prevented many times our sleep by their prolonged and monotonous howlings. During the night we had a regular watch to alarm us in case of danger from the Indians, and lighted large

ABDUCTION OF DANIEL BOONE'S
DAUGHTER BY THE INDIANS

Painted while Wimar studied in Duesseldorf.

fires around our camp to scare away the bears and wolves, which were ever on the scent.

"Near Fort Sarpy we found a very powerful tribe of the Crow Indians; these we visited, remaining with them a short time, and then returned down the river in a boat constructed from buffalo hides to Fort Union, where we took our oar-boat and descended still lower. As there were but eight of us in the return party, we had to take our regular duty at the oars, often traveling only at night, and accomplishing the journey in 42 days.

"I finally arrived safely in St. Louis after an absence of nearly six months in the Indian country."

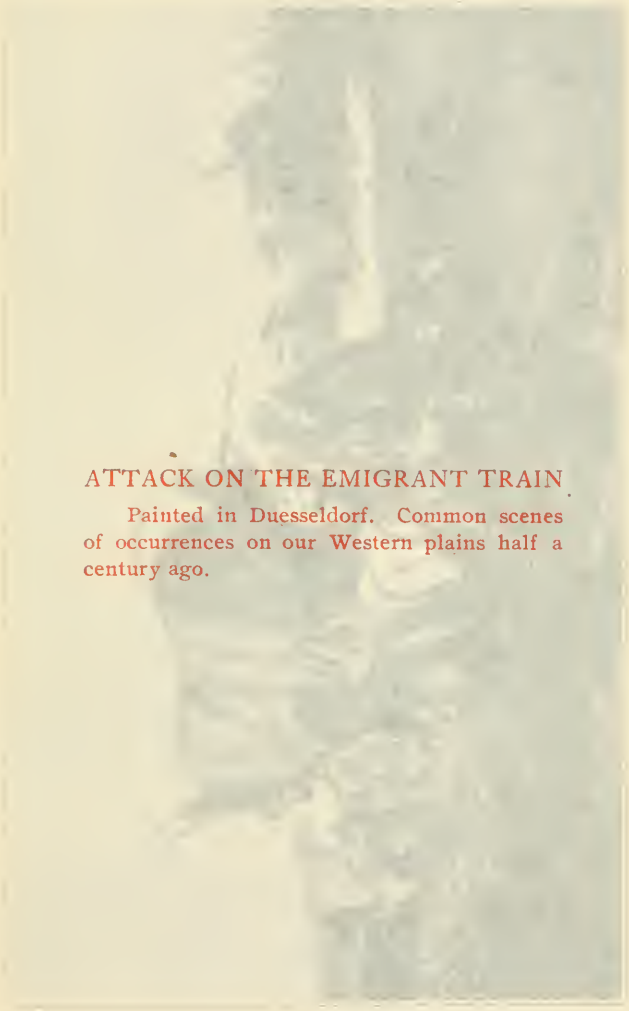
After Wimar had made a couple of these excursions, the savages learned that he was no sorcerer, and began to look for him on the first boat of the season. The squaws made head-dressess, tobacco-pouches, and such curious articles as they knew he delighted in possessing. He was so gentle in his ways that these implacable haters of the white man actually learned to love him, and when at last a steamer arrived with the intelligence that he was dead, there was sincere mourning among those who were wont to rejoice at the death of a pale-face. His studio was a perfect museum of Indian curiosities, and at the time of his death he possessed what was then probably the best collection of Indian weapons, implements and costumes in the country. Although of pure German blood, he had many of the physical characteristics of an Indian, prominent cheek bones, small eyes, and the pigeon-toed shambling gait of the American savage. In his Indian costume, which he often wore, he would, when tanned by exposure, easily have been mistaken for a red man. In fact, I have been told by a German who saw him daily for years, that almost to the last he supposed him to be at least a half-breed. But here the resemblance stopped. In character he was shy and reserved, and there is something marvelous in the loving remembrance in which he is held by those to whom he made himself known. I recall now three men with heads frosted by time, whose eyes glistened with tears when, as I led them to speak of Carl and their association with him, they came to his pitiful struggles. his solicitude for his mother, his gentleness and truth, his

longing to live so as to complete worthily what he had begun —and this many, many years after his death.

The fate of the warrior who was Wimar's companion and friend in boyhood is so tragic that I cannot withhold the story. Among the first bands of Indians taken to England for exhibition was this particular chief. He had never seen the ocean and was unfamiliar with its perils. Soon after leaving Sandy Hook he noticed with disgust the distressing manifestations of seasickness, which he attributed to a racial weakness of the paleface. With haughty stride he paced the deck unable to conceal his contempt for the victims of *mal de mer*. As the ship sped her way on the broad Atlantic and caught the heaving swell of the mighty deep he became conscious of a new sensation, unspeakably horrible. He fought against it with a fierce resolve, but to no purpose, and when satisfied that he, a warrior and chief, was to be subjected to the same degradation as palefaces, he drew a knife from his belt and plunged it into his heart and fell dead on the deck.

When the Civil War came, for a time it seemed doubtful which way the scales would turn, whether to the side of the Union or to that of Secession. As a consequence nearly all business except that relating to war was suspended. In those exciting times people had no thought of pictures. But when it became apparent that St. Louis was to be held by the Federal Government, confidence was in a measure restored, and money began to circulate. Wimar's faithful characterizations of the Indian attracted attention, and he began to receive commissions, and when it became manifest that consumption had fastened itself upon him, people were more than ever anxious for his works. He had always been desirous first, of buying a home for his mother, and second, of securing a sufficient sum of money to place himself above the reach of possible want. Towards the last he was importuned to finish his orders, and money was almost thrust upon him. One day he said to his mother, with a sad smile, "Mother, if I last long enough I shall be so rich that I can have a bank account."

In 1861, March 7th, Wimar married Miss Anna von Senden, the adopted daughter of Mrs. Dr. Pulte. Of this union one child was born, named Wenona, which, however,



ATTACK ON THE EMIGRANT TRAIN

Painted in Duesseldorf. Common scenes of occurrences on our Western plains half a century ago.

died in early childhood. His widow later married Charles Schleiffarth, and is still a resident of St. Louis.

The only public work left by Wimar are four elliptical paintings and four portraits in the dome of the St. Louis Court House. Dr. William Taussig was chairman of the County Commissioners in 1861. He was aware of the great talent of Wimar, and resolved that he should be employed to do the work. Some of the Commissioners wanted to let the job in open competition to the lowest bidder, but were finally induced to leave the matter to a special committee, consisting of Dr. Taussig and John F. Fisse, who beforehand had resolved to give the work to Wimar, who entered into the project with great enthusiasm. When consulted as to his compensation he named the sum of $500. His health was failing and he was often in want. Realizing that the amount named was much too small the Commissioners named $1000 for the decoration of the dome, and the contract was let to Wimar and his half brother, August H. Becker, a noted fresco painter (Examples of the skillful and artistic work of August H. Becker, may yet be seen at the Merchants' Exchange hall and many of the older public buildings and residences of St. Louis. He died in 1903.) Thus Wimar received only $83.33 for each of the twelve important pictures that he executed, this sum also including Becker's remuneration for the other decorative work.

The large paintings in the four elliptical panels are "De Soto discovering the Mississippi," "Laclede Landing at the Site of St. Louis," "Indian Attack on St. Louis," probably in 1780, and "Westward the Star of Empire takes its course," a group of emigrants moving toward the Rocky Mountains and the setting sun, a herd of Buffalo fleeing before them. It will thus be seen that Wimar had an appreciation of what should be done in a public building located on what was then almost the frontier of civilization on the Continent. In the narrow vertical panels he painted four allegorical figures, "Justice," "Solon," "Mercury," and another subject unknown, as years after they were obliterated by an Italian decorator, Miragoli, who was permitted to paint over these designs of his own. Beneath were four portraits, Washington, Martha Washington, Edward Bates and Thomas H. Benton.

The story of the execution of these paintings is one of infinite pathos. Wimar was slowly dying of consumption. Toward the last he was carried to the Court House and up to his scaffold, where he was placed on a couch upon which he could rest when almost fainting from fatigue, and then carried home at night after his day's work. On returning home one evening he said to his wife, "This is my last work, when the dome is finished I shall be finished too." His words were only too true, for when the dome was finally finished the brush fell from his hand and he died on the 28th of November, 1862. It is a great pity that probably because the plaster upon which the dome paintings were executed was not thoroughly dry, in after years the paint began to peal off, and they were restored probably in 1888 by Mr. Becker, his half brother, who had become so thoroughly embued with the spirit of Wimar that he reproduced the pictures with great fidelity, only retouching the ruined portions of the originals.

Again in 1905 the work of restoration was brought up and the contract let to Prof. E. H. Wuerpel of St. Louis, who with the assistance of Mr. James Kelly, a well know St. Louis restorer, again pretty well restored the paintings.

Since that time three years have passed and the pictures have again become encrusted with grime and coal soot, and are so miserably lighted that looking into the dome from the first floor it is difficult to distinguish the subjects. They should again be thoroughly cleaned by an expert and sufficiently lighted. It is to be regretted that the pictures were not originally painted on canvass, framed and hung in a convenient place in the Court House, where they would thus have been far better preserved and better seen and appreciated.

The four large historical pictures have been recognized and pronounced by many of the highest authorities as masterpieces of their kind, and they have given the name of their originator additional fame through the high praise and expressions of admiration lavished upon them by Art representatives of the German and French Governments at the Chicago World's Fair, 1893, who came to St. Louis especially for the purpose of seeing his pictures.

It is perhaps not generally known that Wimar used different kinds of colors in the execution of the Court House

BUFFALO CROSSING THE PLATTE RIVER

Also called "The Haunts of the Buffalo." Fifty years ago these wild animals could be seen in herds of thousands roaming over our vast northwestern plains, hunted by their enemies, both the red and the white man. To-day this noble animal is practically extinct.

Descriptive Extract out of *Missouri Republican*, October 2, 1871:—"A herd of Buffalo are moving slowly over a river. To the left are rocky bluffs and a river vista is in the background; the sun is below the horizon and there is a crimson glow in the heavens but a gloaming light over the earth. The sky perspective is free from clouds and fades in quiet and faintly luminous distance. This picture has Wimar's suggestive color effects but we regard it as one of his best pictures, viewed at a proper distance however, there is a harmony in its dusk tints and a charm of the wilderness about it that causes the eye to willingly revert to its contemplation." Exhibited at Annual St. Louis Fair in 1871, by Samuel M. Dodd.

pictures. Just prior to the last restoration Prof. H. C. Ives, of the St. Louis Art Museum, made a careful examination and found that in spots water color, oil color and gouache had been applied and all blended together. This process is said to have been originated by Wimar, who used it to produce his beautiful color effects, and which, through its use, permitted him to reproduce so true to nature the peculiarly beautiful color tones and hues found in the mountains, valleys and plains of our Western country.

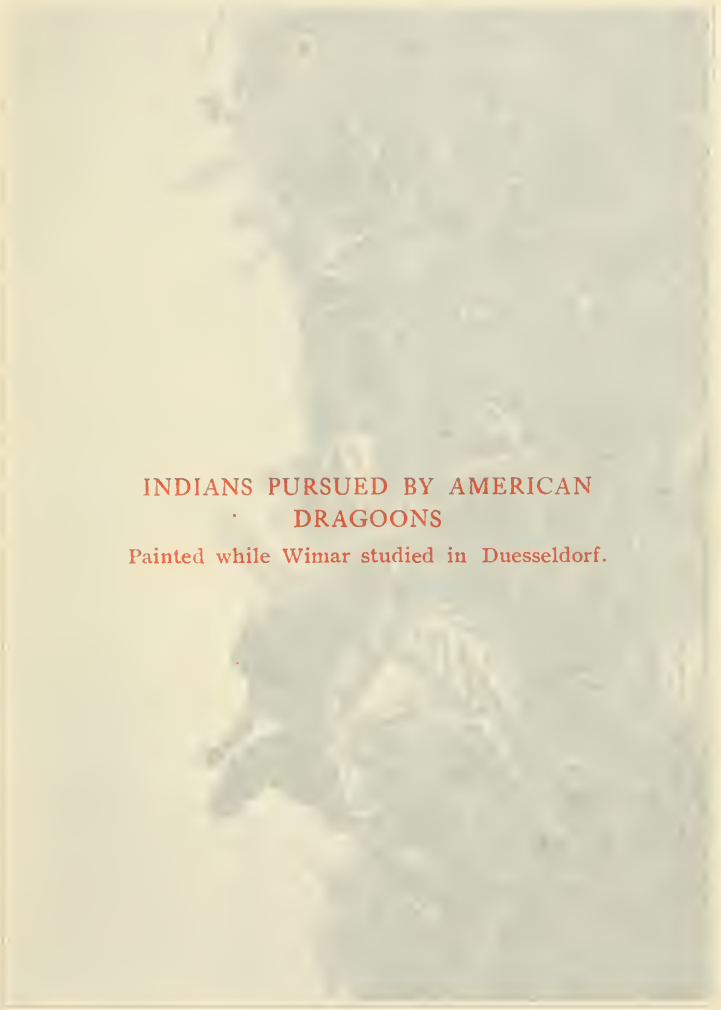
Phillip Gilbert Hamilton, writing of the American pictures in the Paris Exposition of 1878, said, "The only objection to the American exhibition is one which has been made elsewhere, namely, its curious lack of nationality. European influence has so overpowered the American native genius, whatever that may have been, that on entering a room, filled with pictures all painted by natives of the United States, an Englishman does not at all feel as if he had crossed the Atlantic; it seems to him, rather as if he had simply crossed the channel and found himself among his old acquaintances of the European continent. This of course may be easily accounted for. The American artists learn painting in Europe and always, or nearly always, on the Continent, so that they acquire Continental habits of work. It is evident from the American Gallery at the Paris Exhibition that the Americans are not without natural artistic aptitudes, probably quite as good as those of any nation in Europe, but as yet they are the too docile pupils of European teachers, and give us little that is decidedly and originally American."

The tendency continues, and the possibilities for something distinctively American and original in public work are still overlooked. This is illustrated in the Capitol of one of our Western states recently completed. Architecturally it is a fine structure, conceived and executed with rare intelligence and fidelity. In the interior, native stone, granite and sand-stone are used with exquisite effect, illustrating the resources of the State. When it came to the decoration, no parsimony was manifested, but a number of the foremost American artists were commissioned to do the work. What an opportunity was here presented ! With a history extending back to the Jesuit Missionaries and the Coureurs des bois from lower Canada, the numberless contacts with Indians,

tragic and otherwise; with soldiers in the Civil War who by their heroism shed luster upon the American name for all ages; with almost unexampled achievements in the peaceful arts; with scenery unsurpassed; what a story could have been told of evolution; no element romantic, tragic, historic or scenic lacking. What was accomplished? Instinctively the artists turned to the old time-worn paths. Mythology and allegory, and the gods and goddesses of Olympus were paraded to the mystification of the tax payers. Standing under the dome I saw the farmers and their wives gazing upward. Said one, "Eziekel, what are all those naked men and women doing up there?" Eziekel, was unable to solve the problem, neither was I. There was, however, one artist among the number who has within him enough of artistic preception and Americanism to paint in all of its barbaric splendor a great historic conclave of Indian tribes, held in the State in 1859. Fine in composition, splendid in color and dramatic interest, it was withal American and part of the splendid history of the State, and Mary did not have to ask Eziekel its meaning. The name of that artist is Frank D. Millet.

For more than three hundred years the history of this country has been largely that of conflict with the Indian, who roamed the entire continent. With the advent of the white man began the impressible conflict, which in the United States terminated almost with the nineteenth Century. The wild Indian and the buffalo are practically as extinct as the men and animals of the stone age. As graphically expressed by Parkman in the last edition of "The Oregon Trail"— "Since that time change has grown to metamorphosis. For Indian teepes, with their trophies of bow, lance, shield, and dangling scalp-locks, we have towns and cities, resorts for health and pleasure seekers, with an agreeable society, Paris fashions, the magazines, the latest poem, and the last new novel. The sons of civilization, drawn by the fascinations of a fresher and bolder life, thronged to the western wilds in multitudes which blighted the charm that lured them.

"The Buffalo is gone, and of his millions nothing is left but bones. Tame cattle and fences of barbed wire have supplemented his vast herds and boundless grazing grounds. Those discordant serenaders, the wolves, that howled at evening about the traveler's camp-fire, have succumbed to



INDIANS PURSUED BY AMERICAN DRAGOONS

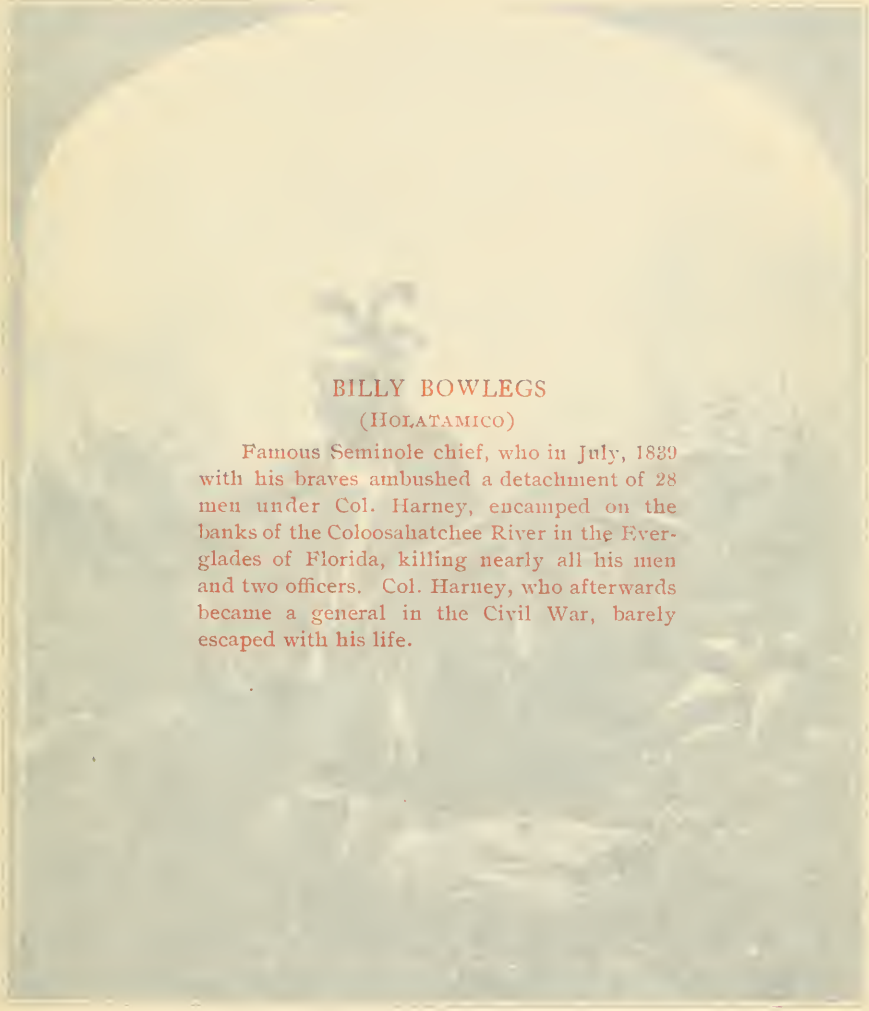
Painted while Wimar studied in Duesseldorf.

arsenic and hushed their savage music. The wild Indian is turned into an ugly caricature of his conqueror, and that which made him romantic, terrible and hateful, is in a large measure scourged out of him. The slow cavalcade of horsemen armed to the teeth has disappeared before parlor cars and the effeminate comforts of modern travel."

The productive period of Wimar's life, after his return from Duesseldorf to his death in 1862, was but five years, scarcely long enough to enable him to obtain a firm grasp upon his art. A short five years of bitter struggle with poverty and adverse conditions, yet productive of works which gave him the distinction of being the first to discover and worthily utilize the supurb possibilities of the Indian as a motive in art. It is most strange that none of our early painters seemed conscious of the existence of the Indian save as the blood thirsty and implacable enemy of the white man, and it is possible that race hatred blinded their eyes to his pictorial value, and that it was reserved to one foreign born, with a mind unclouded by the recollection of centuries of relentless warfare to perceive with an artist's eye a virgin field unequaled in dramatic and pictorial interest.

Had he lived to mature years, with the patronage and appreciation which was his at the moment the light failed and the brush fell from his nerveless fingers, what might he not have accomplished?

Of the generation following, a few men of talent have successfully trodden the path blazed by Wimar, but none have surpassed him in the wild free life of the Indian in the trackless West, and his works will enhance in value as the wild Indian and buffalo become a faded memory.



BILLY BOWLEGS

(Holatamico)

Famous Seminole chief, who in July, 1839 with his braves ambushed a detachment of 28 men under Col. Harney, encamped on the banks of the Coloosahatchee River in the Everglades of Florida, killing nearly all his men and two officers. Col. Harney, who afterwards became a general in the Civil War, barely escaped with his life.

LIST OF WIMAR'S WORKS AND THEIR OWNERS

Compiled by Charles Reymershoffer, Galveston, Texas
November, 1907

Mrs. Howard Blossom, St. Louis, Mo.	Buffalo Hunt. Lord Lyon's picture, being replica of "Buffalo Hunt" owned by the Museum of Fine Arts, St. Louis. Painted, 1860.
August A. Busch, St. Louis, Mo.	Abduction of Daniel Boone's Daughter by the Indians. Started in Duesseldorf in 1855, on exhibition at the Second Annual St. Louis Fair, October, 1857. Original owner, I believe, Jno. A. Brownlee, St. Louis. At the Loan Exhibit of the St. Louis Mercantile Library Association, held in 1871, there was exhibited by Jos. LaBarge a picture called "Capture of D. Boone's Daughter" by Wimar. This may have been the Davis picture, *i. e.* "The Canoe Picture."
A. H. Gale, St. Louis, Mo.	Billy Bowlegs. Original. Noted Seminole chief exhibited at the Tenth Annual St. Louis Fair, 1870, by Pettes & Leathe. Exhibited also at the St. Louis Exposition Hall, 1890.
St. Louis Museum of Fine Arts, St. Louis, Mo.	The Wounded Buffalo. Painted 1859. Buffalo Crossing the Yellowstone. Painted 1859. Buffalo Hunt. Painted 1860. Indians Approaching Fort Benton on the Upper Missouri. Painted 1859.

Mrs. Anna Schleiffarth, St. Louis, Mo.

INDIANS CAMPED ON THE MISSOURI.

MOUTH OF THE MILK RIVER OR INDIANS CROSSING AT THE MOUTH OF THE MILK RIVER.

BEAR ON DEAD ELK.

BILLY BOWLEGS.
Replica by Wimar. Original owned by A. H. Gale. Still another in existence in St. Louis, being a copy of Wimar's pictures by Aug. Becker.

LOST TRAIL OR WAR TRAIL.
This is a photograph painted in water colors by Wimar of original oil painting by Wimar, owned by Wm. Lucas, burned in the Pettes & Leathe fire, 1882. Insured for $12,000. Copy in oil by Aug. Becker, owned by Mr. Gustav Cramer, of St. Louis.

PORTRAIT OF PROF. E. LEUTZE.
Three-fourth figure, 29 x 40 inches. Wimar's master and painter of the famous picture "Washington Crossing the Delaware." This is a replica of a Leutze Portrait by another artist copied by Wimar in 1854.

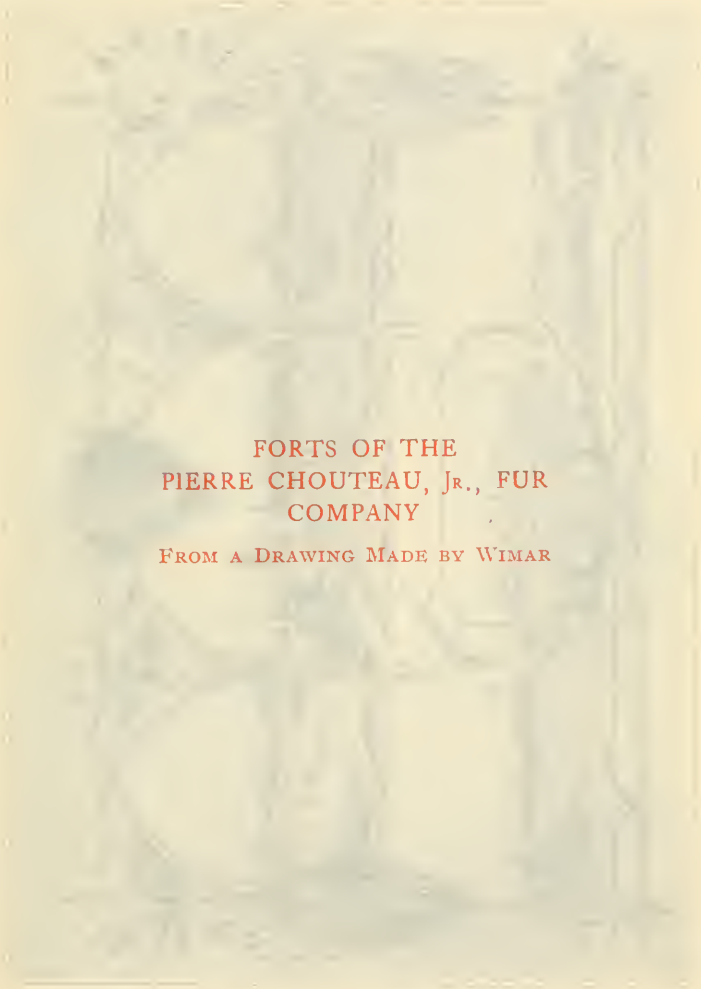
Mrs. Schleiffarth owns an excellent portrait in oil of the artist Carl Wimar, painted I believe by Cogswell.

Mrs. Jos. Dickson, St. Louis, Mo.

BATTLE BETWEEN AMERICAN DRAGOONS AND INDIANS.
Painted in Duesseldorf 1855. Obtained first premium for best animal painting exhibited in the Harding collection at the 16th Annual St. Louis Fair of 1876 in competition with a Troyon and others.

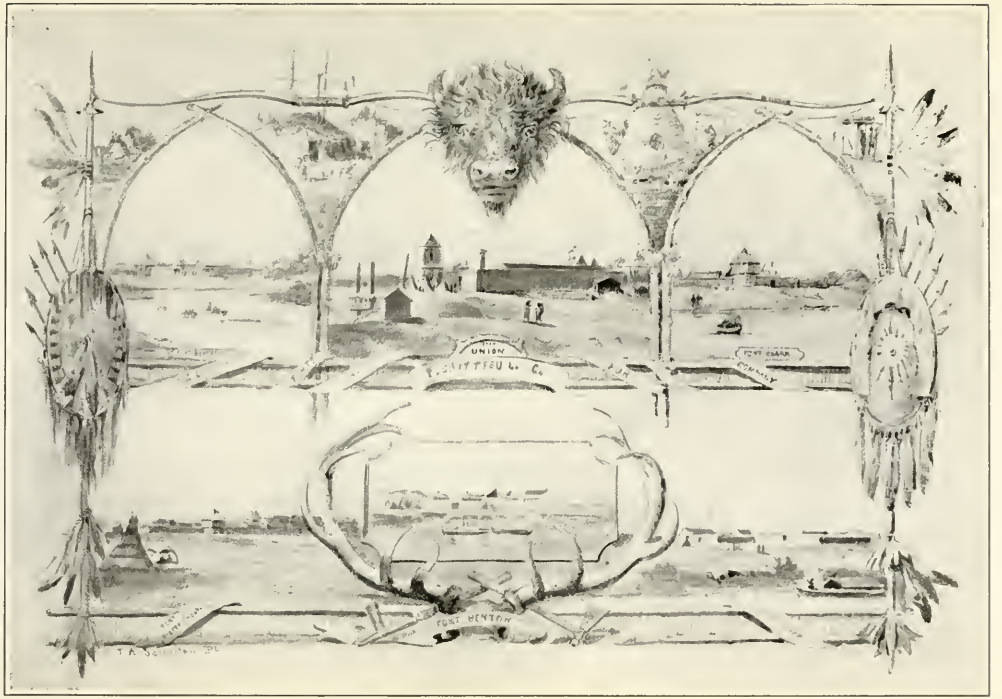
Geo. Warren Brown, St. Louis, Mo.

THE NORTH AND SOUTH JOINING HANDS.
Original sketch (pastel) from which Wimar made a painting for a large panel on the wall of restaurant located on Walnut Street between Second and Third Streets.



FORTS OF THE
PIERRE CHOUTEAU, JR., FUR
COMPANY

FROM A DRAWING MADE BY WIMAR


UNION
FORT CLARK
FORT PENTON

Mrs. Letitia R. Garrison, London, England.

THE CAPTIVE CHARGER.
Painted in Duesseldorf. Passed from Frank Ridgely to Samuel Dodd, who had it on exhibition a great many years at the Mercantile Library. Mr. Dodd sold it in 1885. Sold at private auction at Pettes & Leathe to a New York man for over $3000. An unsigned copy of this picture, painted by a man by the name of Hassett formerly in the employ of Pettes & Leathe is now owned by A. A. Selkirk of St. Louis. Another copy signed Wimar painted by a German artist is now owned by Mrs. Mary A. Cooke, St. Louis.

Mrs. Rosa Becker, St. Louis, Mo. Widow of Emil, Brother of Aug. Becker.

SLEEPING CHILD.
Painted when Wimar was 18 years old.

PORTRAIT OF EMIL BECKER AND HIS DOG DASH.
Painted 1850.

PORTRAIT OF WIMAR'S MOTHER.
Mrs. Becker also has a fine portrait in oil of Carl Wimar painted by his friend, C. Nevels in 1868.

Chas. D. McClure, St. Louis, Mo.

COUNCIL FIRE.

WAR TRAIL.

THREE INDIANS ON BANKS OF A CREEK.

Mrs. Jas. G. Brown, Bloomfield, N. J. Widow of Sam'l M. Dodd's Partner.

A SINGLE BUFFALO.

Mrs. Carl W. Bredemeyer, St. Louis, Mo.

PORTRAIT (LIFE SIZE) OF CAPT. BLANDOWSKY, WIMAR'S FRIEND.

Samuel Cupples, St. Louis, Mo.

BUFFALO CROSSING THE PLATTE.
Also referred to as "Haunts of the Buffalo" and "Buffalo Crossing the Yellowstone." Painted in 1859. At one time, I believe, the property of Samuel Dodd and F. F. Espenschied, City Treasurer.

Mrs. John T. Davis, St. Louis, Mo.	PRAIRIE FIRE. BUFFALO DANCE. Painted 1860. CAPTURE OF DANIEL BOONE'S DAUGHTER BY THE INDIANS. Canoe picture 48x54 painted in Duesseldorf very likely 1853. (Think Wimar got his idea for this composition out of Cooper's world famous Leather Stocking Tales.—C. R.) There were two pictures exhibited under this name at the Second Annual St. Louis Fair 1857. Exhibited in Pettes & Leathe collection (Canoe picture) at the Tenth Annual St. Louis Fair 1870. Also exhibited under this name by Jos. LaBarge in 1871 at the Mercantile Library Association (perhaps the Raft picture.) Again exhibited at the Loan Exhibition of the St. Louis Museum of Fine Arts, 1881 by John T. Davis. At the opening of the Exposition Hall in 1884 this picture was again exhibited.
Ferdinand Diehm, St. Louis, Mo.	CASTLE OF HEIDELBERG.
Mrs. Dr. O. E. Forster, St. Louis, Mo.	BUFFALOS AT DRINK. Painted especially for the Western Sanitary Fair, held in St. Louis in 1864. FLATBOAT SCENES DURING MOONLIGHT ON THE MISSISSIPPI.
Walter Weickert, St. Louis, Mo.	THREE LARGE PORTRAITS. Of Mr. Pfaff (an old St. Louis resident) Mr. Pfaff's mother and his wife. All fine portraits.
Mercantile Library Ass'n St. Louis, Mo.	PORTRAIT OF ROBERT BURNS, THE SCOTCH POET. A Pastel. Painted for the Burns Celebration in St. Louis, 1862, of the Bard's centenary birthday. Voted to the Mercantile Library Association. This portrait was lost.

Mrs. Edgar Miller,
St. Louis, Mo.

ATTACK ON AN EMIGRANT TRAIN.
Painted in Duesseldorf 1854. One of the first pictures Wimar sent to America. Was bought by Gov. Hamilton R. Gamble (father of Mrs. Miller.) This picture was exhibited at the St. Louis Annual Fair in 1869 and obtained the first prize. Was also exhibited in the Retrospective Exhibit of American paintings at the World's Columbian Exposition, Chicago, 1893.

Mrs. Reid Northrop,
St. Louis, Mo.

INDIANS AROUND A CAMP FIRE.
Sold to Mr. R. Northrop by Wm. H. Howe, the great cattle painter.

Mrs. Ida C. Grant,
St. Louis, Mo.
Daughter of Aug. Becker.

HEAD OF A DOG.

HEAD AND BUST OF A HALF BREED.
Mrs. Grant has a number of Indian and animal paintings the work of her father Aug. Becker. Some are copies of Wimar's works and sketches. Among these the principal one is a copy of "Attack on an Emigrant Train." (Copy of the picture in the East, not the Miller picture.) Mrs. Grant also has three fine Indian heads painted by Aug. Becker.

Mrs. Claire Becker,
St. Louis, Mo.
Widow of Wimar Becker.

NO FINISHED WORK OF WIMAR.
An unfinished "Attack on an Emigrant Train" (Wimar's work.) Copy of the picture sold in the East in 1860 or 1861. One or two other unfinished works of Wimar and a number of original Wimar sketches in oil and crayon. Also has a number of finished pictures by the hand of Aug. Becker.

Chas. C. Crecelius
St. Louis, Mo.

PORTRAIT OF CROMWELL.
Painted about 1851.

BLINDMAN'S BUFF.
Painted about 1851.

ENTRANCE TO THE JEDDO RIVER.
Painted about 1851.

Chas. H. McKee,
St. Louis, Mo.

INDIAN ON HORSEBACK.
Sold about two years ago by Chas. H. McKee through Noonan & Kocian (purchaser unknown.)

Wm. H. Bofinger,
New Orleans, La.

A RIDE FOR LIFE.
Indian on horseback. Formerly owned by his brother the late Capt. Bofinger of St. Louis.

Charles Reymershoffer,
Galveston, Texas.

BUFFALO HUNT BY INDIANS.
Original painted for Henry T. Blow of St. Louis. Then passed to his daughter, Mrs. J. C. LeBourgeois, then to her son, J. C. LeBourgeois, Jr., then to Herbert Wadsworth of Washington, D. C. and finally to Charles Reymershoffer. Size 54 x 89, painted 1861.

Wm. H. Howe,
Bronxville, N. Y.
Noted Cattle Painter.

BUFFALO HUNT.
Painted in Duesseldorf, size 14 x 16.

Mrs. Jas. F. How,
St. Louis, Mo.

THE LOST TRAIL.
Bought by Mrs. How's father, Capt. Jas. Eads, years ago. In all probability the subject is treated differently than in the picture that was destroyed by fire.

Mrs. Julia Blanke,
St. Louis, Mo.

DISCOVERY OF BOONE'S CAMP.
Painted in Duesseldorf, 1853.

ON THE ALERT.

INDIAN CHIEF.

Jas. W. Garneau,
St. Louis, Mo.

BUFFALO BULL PURSUED BY WOLVES.
Painted in 1861. Now on exhibition at McCaughen & Burr. (For sale.)

In the East, Boston
Perhaps

ATTACK ON THE EMIGRANT TRAIN.
Subject is treated altogether different than in picture of same title owned by Mrs. Miller. This picture was evidently sold to some Eastern party in 1860 or 1861. It was also painted in Duesseldorf. Mrs. Ida Grant has a finished copy of same painted by her father, Aug. Becker.

St. Louis Court House.	INDIAN ATTACKING VILLAGE OF ST. LOUIS. North panel.
	LANDING OF LACLEDE. East panel.
	DESOTO DISCOVERING THE MISSISSIPPI RIVER. South panel.
	WESTWARD THE STAR OF EMPIRE TAKES ITS COURSE. West panel.
	PORTRAITS OF WASHINGTON, MARTHA WASHINGTON, EDWARD BATES AND THOMAS H. BENTON.
Owned in New York.	BUFFALO HEAD. About 20 x 28. In possession of Noonan & Kocian. (For sale.)
J. F. Petrie, *Or Descendents,* *St. Louis, Mo.*	EARLY PORTRAITS. Exhibited St. Louis Exposition Hall 1890.
C. F. Mathey and *Gus. V. Mechin,* *St. Louis, Mo.*	INDIAN HEADS. Oil Sketches.
Storage House in *New York.*	BATTLE BETWEEN HECTOR AND ACHILLES. Painted in Duesseldorf. This is said to be a very large canvass and located in New York in the hands of some picture dealer.
Residents of St. Louis, Mo.	A NUMBER OF PORTRAITS exist painted by Wimar in possession of the older St. Louis citizens, especially older German residents.

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